

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

The invention may best be understood by reference to the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a silicon bench according to the present invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of a stepped ferrule used with the silicon bench of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a side cross-section view of the stepped ferrule used with the silicon bench of the present invention;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of the stepped ferrule with the silicon bench of the present invention;

Figure 5 is a cross section view of the stepped ferrule in passive alignment with the silicon bench; and

Figure 6 is a side cross section view of a connector sleeve used to connectorize the silicon bench according to one embodiment of the present invention

Figures 7A - <sup>C</sup>7~~B~~ illustrate another embodiment of the present invention.

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